

Yellowstone

Day Hikes In the Mammoth Area

Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone, WY 82190
www.nps.gov/yell



Welcome to the Mammoth Area

Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone’s backcountry begin in the Mammoth area. This guide introduces you to eight selected by interpretive rangers. Always carry rain gear, extra food and water, and other emergency equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Be sure to obtain current trail condition and bear activity information at visitor centers.

Cautions

Hydrothermal areas: The thin ground in these areas breaks easily, and often overlies scalding water. Stay on the trail.

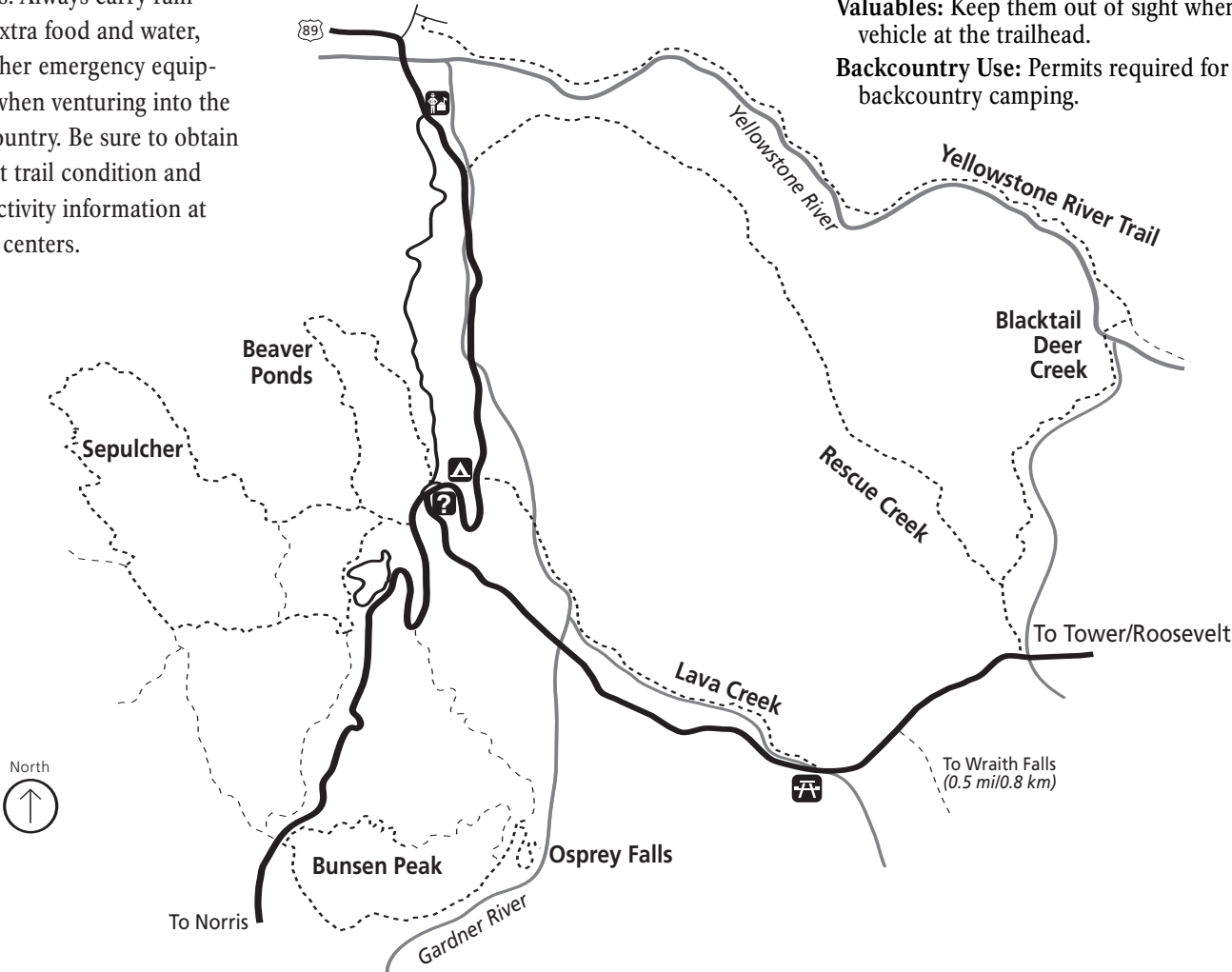
All Wildlife: You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) from bears and at least 25 yards (23 m) from all other animals—including bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, wolves, coyotes. It is illegal to disturb animals from any distance.

Bears: Although your chance of an encounter is low, your safety is not guaranteed. Minimize your risks by making loud noises, shouting, or singing. Hike in groups and use caution where vision is obstructed. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this source of food. Obtain detailed bear information from a ranger at the Albright (Mammoth) Visitor Center.

Fishing: Anglers must have a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit in their possession. Consult the park newspaper or rangers at visitor centers.

Valuables: Keep them out of sight when leaving a vehicle at the trailhead.

Backcountry Use: Permits required for backcountry camping.



Beaver Ponds Loop

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)
Estimated time: 2–3 hours
Difficulty: moderately strenuous
Trailhead: between Liberty Cap and the stone house (the Judge’s house) next to the Mammoth Terraces

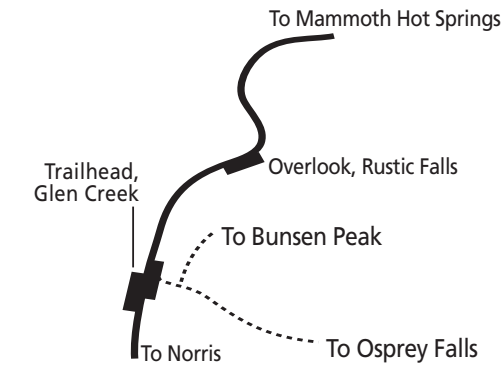


The trail begins just north of Liberty Cap and the Mammoth Terraces, and begins with a 350 foot (106.7 m) climb up and above Clematis Gulch. At the junction with Sepulcher Mountain Trail, go right. Soon thereafter, the trail levels out and rambles through meadows and stands of aspen to a series of beaver ponds. Look for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, moose, beaver dams and lodges, the occasional beaver, and waterfowl. Be alert for bears: both black and grizzly bears forage in this area. Past the ponds, the trail travels through forest and grassland back to Mammoth.

Bunsen Peak

Distance, round trip: 4.2 miles (6.7 km)
Estimated time: 2–3 hours
Difficulty: moderately strenuous; 1,300 foot climb
Trailhead: 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Mammoth–Norris Road, across from the Glen Creek trailhead

Climb through forest and meadow to the summit of Bunsen Peak, which has panoramic views of the Blacktail Plateau, Swan Lake Flat, Gallatin Mountain Range, and the Yellowstone River Valley. Return by the same route.



Osprey Falls

Distance, round trip: 8 miles (12.8 km)
Estimated time: 5–6 hours
Difficulty: strenuous
Trailhead: 5 miles (8 km) south of Mammoth on the Mammoth–Norris Road, across from the Glen Creek trailhead

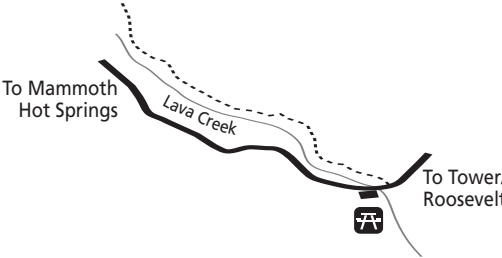
Follow Bunsen Peak Road (hiking/biking only) through grassland and burned forest 2½ miles (4 km) to Osprey Falls Trail (no bikes allowed). Descend 700 feet (213 m) into Sheepsteater Canyon, one of the deepest canyons in Yellowstone. Osprey Falls, on the Gardner River, plunges 150 feet (46 m) over the edge of a lava flow.

Lava Creek

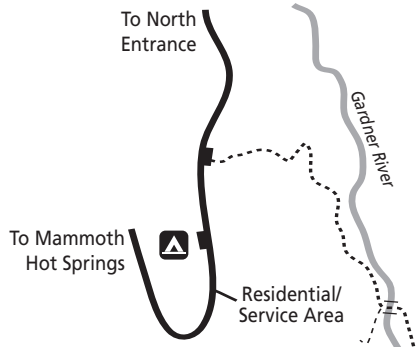
Distance, one way: 3.5 miles (5.6 km)
Estimated time: 3–4 hours
Difficulty: moderately strenuous
Trailhead: Across the road from the Lava Creek picnic area on Mammoth–Tower Road

Follow Lava Creek downstream past Undine Falls (60 feet/18 m), descending gradually. Lava Creek meets the Gardner River further downstream. The trail crosses the river on a footbridge to a final steep climb out, ending near the Mammoth Campground.

Trailhead



Trail End



Rescue Creek

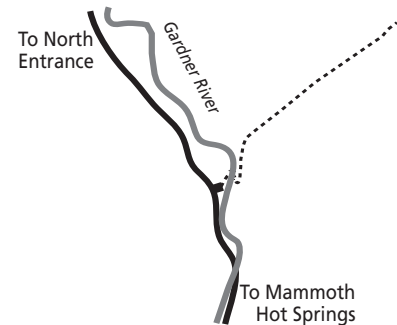
Distance, one way: 8 miles (12.8 km)
Estimated time: 5–6 hours
Difficulty: moderately strenuous
Trailhead: 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on Mammoth–Tower Road; ends 1 mile (1.6 km) south of the North Entrance Station

Follow Blacktail Deer Creek Trail past the east end of Blacktail Pond to the top of a short hill, then veer left on the Rescue Creek Trail. Climb gradually through aspens and meadows, then descend through forests to sagebrush flats that lead to a footbridge across the Gardner River.

Trailhead, Rescue Creek & Blacktail Deer Creek



Trail end, Rescue Creek



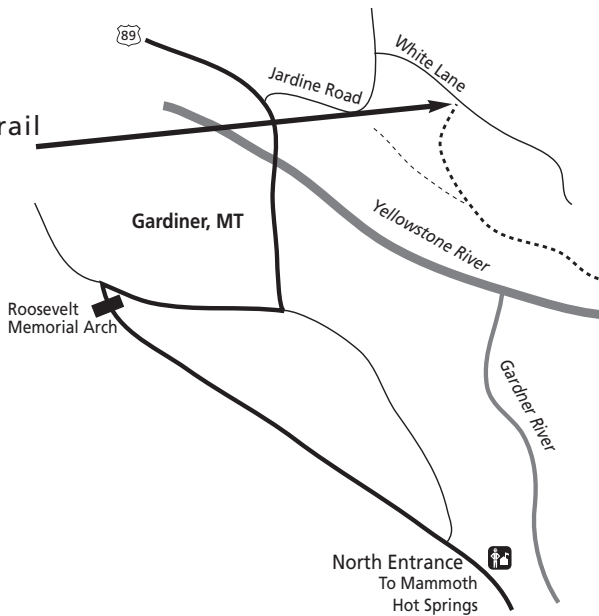
Blacktail Deer Creek/ Yellowstone River

Distance, one way: 12 miles (19.3 km)
Estimated time: 6–8 hours
Difficulty: moderately strenuous
Trailhead: 7 miles (11.3 km) east of Mammoth on Mammoth–Tower Road (map above)

Follow Blacktail Deer Creek as it descends 1,100 feet (33.5 m) through rolling, grassy hills and Douglas-fir forest to the Yellowstone River. Cross the river on a steel suspension bridge then join the Yellowstone River Trail, which continues downriver, passing Knowles Falls and into arid terrain until it ends in Gardiner, MT (map right)

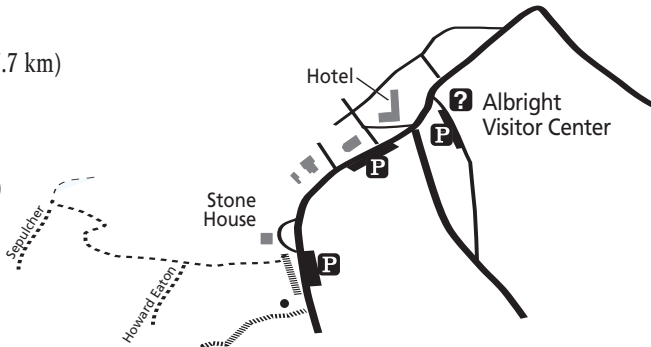
Caution: Very narrow, short stretch near Gardiner is slippery when wet.

Trail end, Yellowstone River Trail



Sepulcher Mountain

Distance, round trip: 11 miles (17.7 km)
Estimated time: 6–8 hours
Difficulty: strenuous
Trailhead: between Liberty Cap and the stone house (the Judge's house) next to the Mammoth Terraces



Follow the Beaver Ponds Trail (see above) to the Sepulcher Mountain Trail junction, then climb 3,400 feet (1,036 m) through forest and meadows to the 9,652 foot (2,942 m) summit. Loop trail continues along the opposite side of the mountain through an open slope to the junction of Snow Pass Trail, which descends to the Howard Eaton Trail, which goes north to Mammoth Terraces and the trailhead.

For more information

www.nps.gov/yell
www.yellowstoneassociation.org

Each major area of the park has a free hike handout. The Yellowstone Association bookstores also sell a “Dayhike Sampler” with a hike or two per area plus several guides for trails throughout the park. Proceeds from all sales support Yellowstone National Park’s interpretive ranger programs.